

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 2788

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS YO

SUBJECT: RUMORS OF GENERAL MISKOVIC' S OUSTER

1. SUMMARY. STORY CIRCULATING HERE AND GAINING CREDENCE THAT COLONEL- GENERAL IVAN MISKOVIC HAS BEEN OUSTED FROM HIS POSITION OF SPECIAL ADVISER TO SFRY PRESIDENCY FOR SECURITY MATTERS. END SUMMARY.

2. ROY GUTMAN (REUTERS) STORY FILED JUNE 19 PICKED UP IN SAME DAY' S RED TANJUG BULLETIN (EXCERPTS FROM FOREIGN PRESS INTENDED PRIMARILY FOR OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV READERSHIP) SAYS OFFICIAL YUGOSLAV SOURCE HAD CONFIRMED THAT MISKOVIC HAD " TEMPORARILY" GIVEN UP HIS DUTIES BECAUSE OF ILLNESS . OFFICIAL COULD NOT CONFIRM THAT MISKOVIC IN FACT REMOVED FOR POLITICAL REASONS. GUTMAN TELL US SOURCE IS OFFICIAL IN FEC SECRETARIAT FOR INFORMATION.)

3. GUTMAN FILED FOLLOW- UP STORY JUNE 20 (WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN CARRIED IN RED TANJUG BULLETIN) REPORTING THAT ACCORDING " INFORMED SOURCES" MISKOVIC DEFINITELY HAS BEEN REMOVED , SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE HE HAD CUT TITO OFF FROM ALL OTHER SECURITY ADVISERS AND DISTORTED INFORMATION GETTING TO TITO. STORY SAYS MISKOVIC REMOVAL GOES BACK SOME TIME -- TO SHORTLY AFTER HIS TITLE HAD BEEN SWITCHED (AT APRIL 5 PRESIDENCY SESSION) FROM SECURITY ADVISER TO TITO PERSONALLY TO SECURITY ADVISER TO

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COLLECTIVE PRESIDENCY.

4. ONLY COVERAGE IN RED TANJUG BULLETIN JUNE 20 IS THAT FIGARO SOLE PARIS PAPER TO REPORT "PURGE" OF MISKOVIC AND THAT FIGARO DESCRIBED HIM AS HARDLINER POLITICALLY AND ONE OF MOST POWERFUL MEN IN THE REGIME.

5. LAST REFERENCE WE HAVE FOUND TO MISKOVIC ACTIVITY IS DATED APRIL 19, WHEN HE TALKED TO OSIJEK AKTIV AND MEMBERS OSIJEK JNA GARRISON.

6. COMMENT. NOTHING IN LOCAL PRESS ABOUT MISKOVIC GIVING UP HIS JOB. RUMORS ABOUT MISKOVIC OUSTER HAVE BEEN CIRCULATING, PARTICULARLY AMONG FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, FOR SEVERAL DAYS, HOWEVER. MUCH OF SPECULATION HAS FOCUSED ON CHANGE IN HIS TITLE LAST APRIL, TO EFFECT THAT ASSIGNMENT TO PRESIDENCY POSITION WAS FIRST STEP IN EASING HIM OUT OF OFFICE. RAY ANDERSON (NY TIMES) FOR ONE HAS FELT HE HAD INSUFFICIENT BASIS FOR STORY ABOUT MISKOVIC OUSTER. BUT FACT THAT RED TANJUG BULLETIN HAS REPRINTED FIRST GUTMAN PIECE ARGUES THAT MISKOVIC IS INDEED OUT, WHATEVER THE REASONS.

7. GENERAL MISKOVIC SOMETIMES WENT INTO PRINT WITH INTERVIEWS, ESPECIALLY THAT GIVEN ZAGREB MAGAZINE VUS SPRING OF 1972 ON ALLEGED DANGERS TO YUGOSLAVIA OF FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES (SEE BELGRADE A-332 OF MAY 16, 1972, AND CITED PREVIOUS AIRGRAMS). FRONT, OFFICIAL JNA JOURNAL, IN ITS MARCH 16, 1973, ATTACK ON VOA USED EXTENSIVE QUOTE FROM MISKOVIC'S VUS INTERVIEW IN INTRODUCTORY SECTION (BELGRADE A-212). HE HAD CLEARLY BUILT UP POWERFUL POSITION FOR HIMSELF AS CLOSE ADVISER/CONFIDANT TO TITO, PRESUMABLY USING HIS INFLUENCE TO BRING HIS BROTHER MILAN INTO SFRY PRESIDENCY (MILAN SEEN RECENTLY AT DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION). MISKOVIC MUST INEVITABLY HAVE MADE MANY ENEMIES WHILE IN ADVISER ROLE TO TITO; WE HAVE HEARD NO SPECULATION WORTH PASSING ON AS TO WHICH ENEMIES MAY HAVE ENGINEERED HIS OUSTER.

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